



ask the landscape professional

Linda K. Lillie of Sprigs & Twigs

Welcome to my weekly series!

Feel free to send me questions you'd like to have me answer and I will do my best to address the ones of most general interest.

Email or mail your questions to: info@sprigsandtwigs.net or
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Question of the Week: *My neighbor attended one of your recent lectures where you talked about the problems caused by using landscape cloth. Could you go over that again?*

Answer: Somewhere along the line, it became popular for many people and landscape companies to use landscape cloth as a so-called "weed barrier". Not only is that a gardening myth, but landscape cloth makes for a maintenance nightmare and does far more harm than good. Landscape cloth actually inhibits water from getting to the roots of plants and prevents groundcovers from spreading. So not only does landscape cloth slowly kill your plants, when you apply mulch on top of landscape cloth, landscape cloth actually keeps the mulch from decomposing - which is exactly what you don't want to happen! As far as landscape cloth being a weed barrier, it turns out that many, if not most weeds get into your garden through the air. They blow around the neighborhood and land in your garden; once there, they grow downward through the landscape cloth. Once weeds get rooted into and through the landscape cloth, they are next to impossible to remove without ripping up the landscape cloth and making a big mess. It seems everywhere you look, you see unsightly landscape cloth that is flapping in the breeze in someone's garden. Bottom line - don't use landscape cloth. It's a waste of money and harmful to your garden.



Never use landscaping cloth; rip it out if you have it



This is a "Mulch Volcano" which will eventually kill this tree

When it comes to weed control, use 2-3" of shredded bark, organic natural (non-dyed) mulch. Mulch keeps the soil cool, allows moisture to reach the roots of your plants, decomposes about 1 inch of thickness each year and adds organic matter to the soil. Weeds that do grow are easily removed. Refresh your mulch 1" each year to help keep the weeds down. Never, ever use more than 2-3" of mulch and don't create "mulch volcanos" with the mulch piled up against the base of plants and trees.

This practice suffocates and stresses the plant which will cause it to eventually succumb to disease and to die. Mulch should not cover the root flare of the tree which is where the tree widens at the base as it transitions to the roots. In this case, more mulch is definitely not better!

"Ask The Landscape Professional" articles are all on our website; if you missed any, go to www.SprigsandTwigs.net

Sprigs & Twigs is now scheduling appointments for 2015 Garden Design, Spring Leaf Clean-ups, Garden Spruce-ups, Landscape Maintenance, Tree Care Services, Organic Lawn Care, Mowing and Trimming Services, Custom Stonework and Custom Carpentry Services. Go to www.SprigsandTwigs.net for details. Call us anytime to discuss your landscape needs and to meet with our staff.

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